

Plastic sheet to cover 20 toxic dump acres

By ANITA SUSI

A huge plastic cover is to be installed over 20 acres of the closed Kin-Buc landfill in Edison in partial settlement of a suit by federal officials against the owners of the chemical dump.

The agreement was announced yesterday by U.S. Attorney Robert Del Tufo and Richard T. Dewling, acting administrator for Region 2 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during a press conference at the EPA laboratories in Edison, only a few miles from the landfill.

The partial settlement of the 69-count complaint against 11 corporations and individuals was filed yesterday before U.S. District Judge Clarkson S. Fisher in Trenton.

Under the agreement, Kin-Buc's owners must post \$500,000 to guarantee construction of an impermeable plastic cover to prevent rainwater from seeping

into a massive garbage mound believed to contain more than 70 million gallons of hazardous and toxic liquid wastes. The rainwater will instead be channeled into ditches leading to the Raritan River.

Del Tufo said the landfill operators will be the first in the nation required to obtain a federal discharge permit, which will allow them to release the rainwater into the river.

The agreement also calls for a series of monitoring wells to be installed around the site to measure for the next 20 years whether toxic wastes are leaching into underground water supplies.

Materials dumped on the site since it began operating in 1973 include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), heavy metals, cadmium, toluene and benzene, Dewling said.

The New Jersey Department of

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Environmental Protection and State Public Utilities Commission ordered the landfill closed in 1976 and joined in yesterday's settlement, according to Deputy Attorney General Jack Van Dalen. He said DEP is also expecting the Kin-Buc owners to file plans within 15 days for cleanup of a smaller dumping site on the property, but noted the 20-acre mound is considered to be the major hazard at the landfill.

Construction of the plastic cover is to start in March and be completed in 90 days or the owners will face fines of \$1,000 a day for each additional day, Del Tufo said.

Del Tufo said he will continue to press for damages, penalties and a \$25 million performance bond to guarantee cleanup of the site. He noted the remainder of the case may take several years to resolve.

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Dewling said that although there is no evidence of any adverse medical effects on residents of the area, he cited instances in which workers at the landfill suffered from skin burns and said EPA workers contracted skin and eye irritations while taking samples at the landfill.

He said chemicals from the site move very slowly underground and could ooze toward a nearby recreation area or water supplies.

"They are in the ground, they are migrating, but we don't know where," said Dewling of the chemicals.

Edison attorney George Spadaro

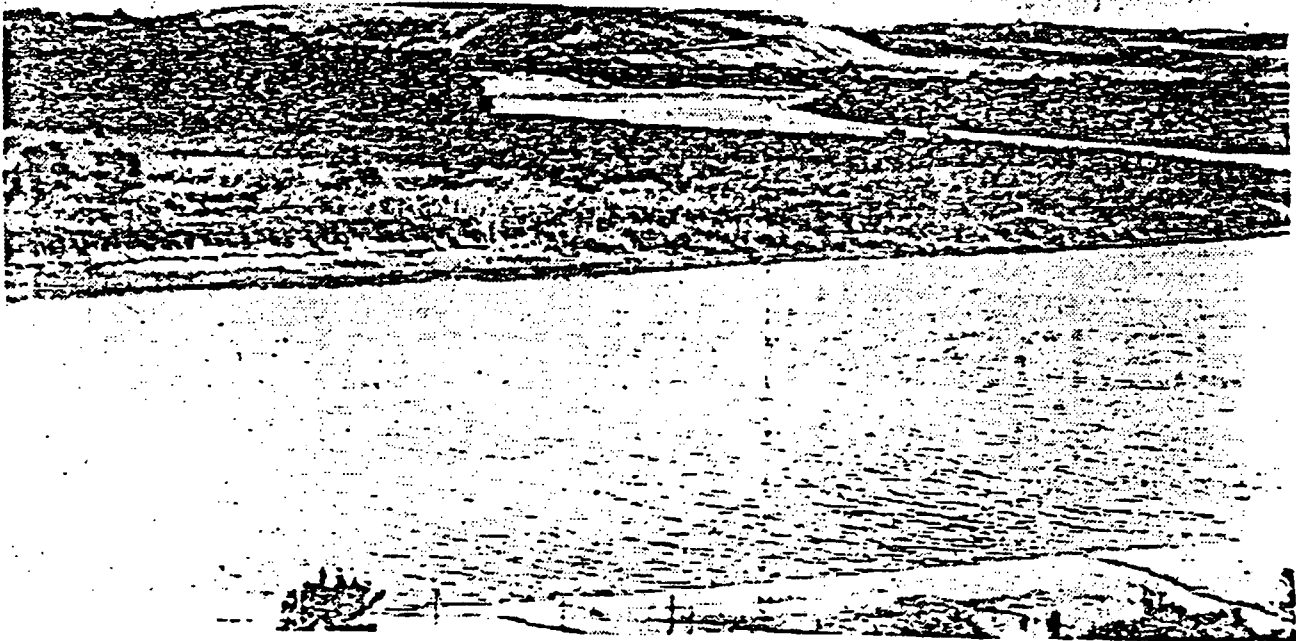


Photo by Vic Yepello

A view of the Kin-Buc landfill, waste disposal acreage situated at the end of Meadow Road in Edison

who represents the Citizens Committee to Close Kin-Buc, said he was pleased with the settlement but said it came four years too late.

Defendants in the Kin-Buc suit filed by Del Tufo include Kin-Buc Inc., Scientific Inc., Filcrest Realty, Inmar Associates, Wastequid, SCA Services, SCA Services of Passaic, Earthline Co., owners of the landfill; and three New Jersey residents, Marvin Mahan, Robert Meagher and Anthony Gaess, officers of some of

the firms.

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Assistant U.S. Attorney Pat Nucciarone said SCA operates in 38 states, trades on the Stock Exchange and is the largest liquid waste disposal company in the nation.